



General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
22 September 2000

Original: English

General Committee

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 6 September 2000, at 8 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Holkeri (President of the General Assembly) (Finland)

Contents

Organization of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: memorandum by the Secretary-General

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00-63284 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 8 p.m.

Organization of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: memorandum by the Secretary-General (A/BUR/55/1 and Add.1)

Section I: Introduction

Paragraphs 4 and 5

1. *The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to the provisions reproduced in annexes V, VI, VII and VIII of its rules of procedure. It took note of paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.*

Section II: Organization of the session

Paragraph 6 (General Committee)

2. *The Committee took note of the decision and resolutions referred to in paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.*

Paragraphs 7 to 11 (Rationalization of work)

3. *The Committee took note of paragraphs 7, 8, 10 and 11 and decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 9 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.*

Paragraph 12 (Closing date of the session)

4. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it should recess not later than Tuesday, 5 December 2000, and to draw its attention to the fact that the closing date of the fifty-fifth session would be subject to a decision by the Assembly. The Committee also decided to recommend to the Assembly that the First Committee should complete its work by Friday, 3 November, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) by Thursday, 9 November, the Third Committee by Friday, 10 November, the Sixth Committee by Tuesday, 21 November, and the Second and Fifth Committees by Friday, 1 December.*

Paragraphs 13 to 15 (Schedule of meetings)

5. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that morning meetings, with the exception of plenary meetings of the Millennium*

Summit, should start at 10 a.m. promptly for all plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees. The Committee also decided to recommend to the Assembly that, as a cost-saving measure, plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees, including informal meetings, should be adjourned by 6 p.m., and that no meetings should be held on weekends, with the exception of the general debate. It further decided to recommend that the cost-saving measure should also apply, for the remainder of 2000, to meetings on the calendar of conferences and meetings.

6. *The Committee decided to recommend that, in order to avoid the late start of meetings, the General Assembly should waive the quorum requirements for plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees and should remind delegations of the utmost importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring an effective and orderly organization of work and achieving economies for the United Nations.*

7. **The Chairman** strongly endorsed the suggestions made at previous sessions that each delegation should designate one of its members to be present at the scheduled starting time of meetings. While some progress had been reported, there was still considerable room for improvement. He therefore urged all delegations to cooperate.

Paragraphs 16 to 19 (General debate)

8. *The Committee took note of paragraph 16 specifying the dates of the general debate, drew the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 17 suggesting a voluntary guideline of 20 minutes for statements in the general debate and endorsed the suggestions contained in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.*

9. **The Chairman** urged representatives, in view of the large number of speakers already inscribed on the list of speakers in the general debate, to take the floor in the order in which they appeared on that list. Those unable to speak at the scheduled time would be put at the end of the list for that meeting.

10. *The Committee decided to recommend that the procedures outlined in paragraph 19 of the Secretary-General's memorandum should also apply during the fifty-fifth session.*

Paragraphs 20 to 22 (Explanations of vote, right of reply, points of order and length of statements)

11. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of its decision 34/401. It also decided to recommend to the Assembly that points of order should be limited to five minutes.

12. The Committee further decided to draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241 and to paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of that resolution (A/52/855), which stated that, since in plenary meetings the length of statements in debates other than the general debate averaged eight minutes, the General Assembly might wish to review the recommendation of a 15-minute limit contained in paragraph 22 of the annex to resolution 51/241.

13. The Committee further decided to draw the attention of the General Assembly to rules 72 and 114 of the rules of procedure and to paragraph 22 of annex VI thereto for appropriate action in plenary meetings and in the Main Committees.

Paragraph 23 (Records of meetings)

14. The Committee decided to take note of paragraph 23 of the Secretary-General's memorandum and, in that connection, decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the practice of not reproducing in extenso statements made in a Main Committee should be maintained for the fifty-fifth session.

Paragraph 24 (Seating arrangements)

15. The Chairman drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 24 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 25 (Concluding statements)

16. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to the need for the full implementation of paragraph 17 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby concluding statements could be made only by presiding officers.

Paragraphs 26 to 29 (Resolutions)

17. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 32 of its decision

34/401 and to recommendation 3 (f) of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, to paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/264 and to paragraphs 1 and 10 of the annex to its resolution 45/45.

Paragraphs 30 to 32 (Documentation)

18. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to paragraph 28 of its decision 34/401, to paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/264 and to paragraph 5 of its resolution 54/248 C emphasizing the six-week in advance rule governing distribution of documents.

19. The Committee also decided to draw the Assembly's attention to paragraph 32 of the annex to its resolution 51/241 appealing to all bodies to exercise restraint in requesting new reports.

Paragraphs 33 to 37 (Questions related to the programme budget)

20. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to the provisions contained in paragraphs 33 and 34, to the observations contained in paragraphs 35 and 36 and to paragraph 37 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraphs 38 and 39 (Observances and commemorative meetings)

21. The Committee endorsed the suggestions contained in paragraphs 38 and 39 of the Secretary-General's memorandum, including a 15-minute limit on statements.

Paragraphs 40 and 41 (Special conferences)

22. The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to the recommendations referred to in paragraphs 40 and 41 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.

Paragraph 42 (Meetings of subsidiary organs)

23. **The Chairman** drew attention to a letter dated 16 August 2000 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/55/312) informing him that the Committee had recommended that a number of subsidiary organs should be authorized to meet during the main part of the fifty-fifth session, on the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services. Authorization was sought for the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Preparatory Committee for the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development.

24. *The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should authorize the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund and the Preparatory Committee for the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development to meet during the main part of the fifty-fifth session.*

*Section III. Observations on the organization of future sessions of the General Assembly**Paragraphs 43 to 45*

25. *The Committee decided to draw the General Assembly's attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 51/241 (A/52/855), in particular paragraphs 16 and 17 thereof, which highlighted the difficulties that would be encountered in the future in implementing that resolution. It also decided to recommend that the General Assembly should address, during its fifty-fifth session, the question of the opening and closing dates of future regular sessions with a view to deciding on a formula to determine those dates.*

26. *The Committee further decided to draw the Assembly's attention to the recommendation referred to in paragraph 45 of the Secretary-General's memorandum.*

*Section IV. Adoption of the agenda (A/55/150)**Paragraph 46*

27. **The Chairman** said that, in accordance with rule 40 of the rules of procedure, the Committee would not consider the substance of any item except insofar as it bore on the question of whether or not to recommend the inclusion of that item in the agenda.

Paragraph 47 (Rationalization of General Assembly procedures)

28. *The Committee took note of the suggestions made in paragraph 47 of the Secretary-General's memorandum and decided to draw the attention of the General Assembly to paragraphs 4 and 5 (a) and (c) of annex I to its resolution 48/264 and to paragraphs 23 to 26 of the annex to its resolution 51/241.*

*Paragraphs 48 and 49 (Inclusion of items)**Items 173, 182 and 185*

29. **The Chairman** noted that the contents of paragraph 48 of the Secretary-General's memorandum would be of relevance for consideration of the inclusion of items 173 and 182, while in paragraph 1 of addendum 1 to that memorandum, the Secretary-General drew the Committee's attention to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council proposing the deletion of item 185.

30. *The Committee took note of paragraph 48 and decided to recommend the deletion of item 185.*

Items 1 to 6

31. **The Chairman** said that since items 1 to 6 had already been dealt with, he took it that there were no comments on their inclusion in the agenda.

32. *It was so agreed.*

Items 7 to 58

33. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion of items 7 to 58 in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session.*

General Assembly. It participated regularly in meetings of the Third Committee of the Assembly, sessions of the Commission on Human Rights and sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. In recent years, the Council had also cooperated with the United Nations in crisis situations in Europe; inter alia, it had close working relations with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. In 1994, the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council had established the practice of holding tripartite high-level meetings on a yearly basis to exchange information and coordinate activities in matters of common concern.

49. The Council of Europe was the only pan-European organization in a position to make a substantial contribution to the United Nations in fields in which its expertise was well recognized, in particular with regard to the building of pluralistic democracy based on the rule of law and respect for human rights. The Council was thus able to enhance on the European continent the ideals set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and contribute to their promotion in other parts of the world. Accordingly, it was appropriate and timely for the General Assembly to take note of the cooperation between the two organizations and to examine ways of strengthening it.

50. **The Chairman** said he took it the Committee wished to recommend the inclusion of item 172.

51. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.

Item 59

34. **Mr. Politi** (Italy) suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of the item entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte" should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session.

35. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) said that, following consultations with the Comoros and France, his delegation wished to support the suggestion made by the previous speaker.

36. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of the item should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session and that it should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.*

Items 60 to 92

37. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion of items 60 to 92 in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session.*

Item 93

38. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) said that, following consultations with Madagascar and France, his delegation wished to propose that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of the item entitled "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India" should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, without prejudice to the positions of those two countries on the issue.

39. **Mr. Göktürk** (Turkey) said that his delegation supported that proposal.

40. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that consideration of the item should be deferred to the fifty-sixth session and that it should be included in the provisional agenda of that session.*

Items 94 to 170

41. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion of items 94 to 170 in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session.*

Item 171

42. **The Chairman** noted that there were eight other items (items 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 180, 181 and

187) with the same title as item 171, namely "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations", and one item (item 177) whose title that was only slightly different, namely "Ad hoc scale of assessments for the United Nations peacekeeping operations". In accordance with the principle that agenda items concerning issues of closely related substance should be merged within a single agenda title where possible, the sponsors of all the items in question had agreed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the consideration of one item entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of United Nations peacekeeping operations" as item 171. He took it that the Committee wished to recommend the inclusion of such a consolidated item.

43. *It was so decided.*

Item 172

44. The Chairman said that the inclusion of item 172, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe", had been proposed by Italy (A/55/191), and that the representative of Italy had asked to address the Committee on the matter under rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

45. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Borzi Cornacchia (Italy) took a place at the Committee table.*

46. **Ms. Borzi Cornacchia** (Italy) said that the United Nations and the Council of Europe had long been cooperating, sharing as they did the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The democratic rights and freedoms developed and protected by the Council were enshrined in the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights and other instruments. The Council had developed means of enforcing respect for human rights, in particular by establishing the European Court of Human Rights.

47. The enlargement of the membership of the Council to 41 countries and the prospect of further enlargement to include all European countries had significantly extended the Council's geographic scope and endowed it with a pan-European dimension.

48. Cooperation between the Council and the United Nations had begun as far back as 1951, and the Council had also concluded agreements with various United Nations bodies and specialized agencies. In 1989 the Council had been granted observer status at the